He who knows Life, his being fails not, and he becomes immortal.
—*Prashna Upanishad*

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 52 SEPTEMBER, 1964 NUMBER 11

AN END TO FRUSTRATION

THE darkness which the Books say, "was at first of all," does not belong only to primeval beginnings. Like the light, it comes and goes. There are recurring moments of what, for human beings, seems absolute frustration, when rationality is put at naught, when even the heart has no power to penetrate the darkness.

These moments in the lives of mortals have only one master—Time. They are, in the Neoplatonic phrase, "imperishable roots of unreason," and belong to the human lot. Of them, it can hardly be said that they do not make an end to time and its cycles. And since light is the other of the world's eternal ways, the darkness must eventually give way.

What is the darkness we can least abide? It is the unresolvable shadow of a heart that is knotted and turned against itself. From this come all turnings away of men from their fellows; from this comes the blind, impersonal cruelty of righteous partisanship, the cooled and frozen anger of *systematic* separation and division among mankind.

Yet it is always ignorance which hardens the heart—ignorance and its tribe of offspring, insecurities and fears.

How we long to change the wicked of this world! How we work to bring to them the saving essence of righteousness and morals! And so it happens that some intervening darkness always overtakes these excellent works. What then can we do for the wicked in their sins? Exactly nothing. What is perhaps most difficult to bear is that these times come, not to make a definition of the ways of the

wicked, nor to prove their stubborn resistance of the good, but to provide some instruction of ourselves. No man involved in doing good can fail to reach this barrier where, as though the world has had enough of his virtue, he is thrown back upon himself. Who does he think he is, to be the one chosen to fix everything up? Who is he to sigh in melancholy patience at the persistent follies of mankind? How did he get so wise? The wise long since put their wisdom behind them. The wise no longer know "frustration." The wise know the times of the cycles and waste no mournful tears on the ways of the world. Only time, and the inner workings of cycles, will ever untie the hardened knots of the heart.

We, alas, are continually making plans for others. No one has such models of rectitude as those we are able to make up. And so there comes a vast impatience with the laggard progress of evolution. But what if we are laggard, too, in grasping the need to let others find their own way? If a man insists upon standing up to what seem unnecessary bludgeonings of fate, who are we to decide when he has had enough? Do we keep time-sheets on the work-days of Karma? Do we know when the knots are really loosening, or only finding a new set in which to be hardened by brine?

It is a curiously unwelcome thought—the one which says no man who works on his own nature is ever frustrated; who never sighs save at his own silly rationalizations. He knows he has a very tough job, and so he has for others little more than sympathy. They have the same tough job, too, and so many of them have not even begun to work on it. Yet of this he can hardly be sure; at any rate, he does not comment.

What a burden is lifted from our tired shoulders when we see that we no longer need to make those careful and conscientious corrections of others—that this is a job for Nature and the Adepts. Nor any longer will we have to make up theories of righteousness for them, which is after all far too great a strain for any honest man. It is true enough that we lose the comforting thought that, save for all those people "out there," who waste their substance and their opportunity, the Golden Age would be upon us in a trice! Even the sense of belonging to an embattled minority which labors for the right may suffer some kind of sea-change. But to shake out of vanity in these attitudes may be the only step we can take in interludes of darkness. It is a way of saying that some of the darkness can not help but be ours.

MISUNDERSTOOD BIBLICAL TRADITIONS

MIRACLES—II

ONE of the most fantastic pages of early Church history, a story little known to the average present-day church-goer, relates to the obscure, nevertheless historical, personage of Simon Magus, known to New Testament readers as Simon, the Sorcerer. All that the average Christian knows of this story is recorded in Acts 8: 9-24, where Simon is shown to have been a pre-Christian magician, called by the people of Samaria "the great power of God." But Simon, according to this record, had been teaching "for many years" before Philip, and later Peter and John, arrived in that country on their missions. His following among the people, "from the least to the greatest," seems to have been enormous. Notwithstanding this extraordinary popularity, which probably gave him undisputed religious leadership in the land, Simon listened to the teaching of Philip, became a believer, and was baptized. Not only this—he "continued with Philip" on the latter's journey through Samaria, contributing much, no doubt, to the latter's success. Except for Simon's help, it is a question whether Philip would have been able to send word back to Jerusalem that "Samaria had received the word of God." It was this message that brought Peter and John to that country to continue the work of conversion.

Simon's condemnation, as theological scholars well know, is based primarily upon the battles recorded in the voluminous writings of the early Church Fathers. This literature, almost entirely unknown to the average Christian devotee, is literally filled with the rivalries and dissensions, the jealousies and animosities within the early Church, especially those of Peter, Simon and Paul—a phase of Church history most priests and preachers would like to forget. But one of the objects of the present Theosophical Movement is the restitution of borrowed robes and the vindication of glorious but calumniated reputations. So even at the risk of painful disillusionment for Christians in the wisdom and integrity of some of their predecessors, it seems only just that these writings be given attention.

Besides what is contained in Acts, the following early Christian writers all have something to say about the history and teaching of the mysterious personage known as Simon Magus: Clement I, the third Pope of Rome (after Peter and Linus), who knew personally some of the apostles, and whose writings (known as the *Clementine Literature*) are held to have been recorded before A.D. 100; Justin Martyr (103—167); Irenaeus (born 97-147, died 202-3); Clemens Alexandrinus (born 150-160, death unknown); Tertullianus (born 150-160, died 220-240); Hippolytus (date unknown, probably 190—250); Philastrius (date of birth unknown, died probably 387 A. D.); Epiphanius (born 310-320, died 404); Hieronymus (wrote in the year 387); and Theodoretus (born toward the end of the third century, died 353-358).

All these writers—who were either Christian Fathers themselves or individuals loyal to the teaching of the growing Church, and therefore intolerant of any interpretation other than their own—virulently denounce of course both Simon and his teaching. Not one had a word of praise, or even of kindness, for this man of deep religious conviction. Except for the philosophical debates of Peter and Simon, as related by Clement, and also the third century document known as *Philosophomena,* supposedly written by Hippolytus, we would know practically nothing of Simon's beliefs and teachings. The same hand that laid waste the numerous Gnostic treatises of Marcion, Basilides and Valentinus, destroyed also, no doubt, the books of Simon, and is to be "thanked" for the fact that we possess today only one side of the story—the Church side—of this great Pagan philosopher, whom Irenaeus called the originator of *Gnosticism.* Two works by Simon, *The Great Revelation* and *The Four Quarters of the World,* are known to have been current in the early Christian era, for they were either quoted from or mentioned by historians; but neither exists today. It can only be viewed as ironical, then, that in condemning the doctrines of Simon both Clement and Hippolytus unwittingly preserved for posterity at least a fragment of his teachings—enough, at any rate, to identify their theosophical and gnostic sources. (An accompanying article, immediately following this one, quotes extensively from the *Philosophomena.* Its philosophical orientation is pre-eminently that of Gnosticism; its symbology that of the ancient and eternal Wisdom Religion, or Theosophy. The gross materialistic interpretation given by Simon's traducers seems too obvious to require comment.)

All that we know of Simon's history is contained, for the large part, in the so-called *Clementine Literature,* especially *Recognitions* and *Homilies*. Clement, it seems, arrived in Cæsarea on the eve of a great controversy between Peter and Simon. Aquila and Nicetas, former associates of Simon, now defected and turned enemy, relate to Clement, in the presence of Peter, the following: Simon Magus was a Samaritan, son of Antonius and Rachael, born in the village of Gitta, some twenty-odd miles from the city of Cæsarea. He was a disciple of John the Baptist, the favorite among thirty, they said, and it was in John's school in Alexandria that he perfected his studies in magic. At the time that John was beheaded, Simon was away from Alexandria on some mission, so that Dositheus, a co-disciple, was chosen head of the school. On his return, Simon acquiesced in the choice, even though his own wisdom was far superior to that of Dositheus. One day, according to the story, Dositheus became enraged and struck at Simon with his staff. To the amazement of Dositheus, the staff passed through Simon's body as though it were smoke, causing no injury. At this, Dositheus yielded leadership of the School to Simon and became his disciple, dying stortly afterwards.

Aquila and Nicetas warned Peter of Simon's great learning, his use of language, and his skill in debate. They also narrate something of his magical achievements, feats both had witnessed with their own eyes. Not only Clement, but also such reliable Church Fathers as Justin Martyr and Irenæus attest to the extraordinary skill of this Pagan magician. In a petition or complaint to the Emperor of Rome (*Apologia* I, 26), Justin says:

> And thirdly, that even after the ascension of the Christ into heaven the dæmons cast before themselves (as a shield) certain men who said that they were gods, who were not only not expelled by you (the Romans), but even thought worthy of honours; a certain Samaritan, Simon, who came from a village called Gitta; who in the reign of Claudius Caesar (A.D. 41-54) wrought magic wonders by the art of the dæmons who possessed him, and was considered a god in your imperial city of Rome, and as a god was honoured with a statue by you, which statue was erected in the river Tiber, between the two bridges, with the following inscription in Roman: "Simoni Deo Sancto." And nearly all the Samaritans, but few among the rest of the nations, confess him to be the first god and worship him. And they speak of a certain Helen, who went round with him at that time, and who had formerly prostituted herself, but was made by him his first Thought.

Irenaeus (*Contra Hæreses,* I, xxiii, 1-4), who was born around the year 100, or shortly thereafter, has the following to say:

> Simon was a Samaritan, the notorious magician of whom Luke the disciple and adherent of the apostles says: "But there was a fellow by name Simon, who had previously practiced the art of magic in their state, and led away the people of the Samaritans, saying that he was some great one, to whom they all listened, from the small to the great, saying: 'He is the Power of God, which is called Great.' . . . .
>
> Now the sect of the Samaritan Simon, *from whom all the heresies took their origin* (italics ours, Ed.), was composed of the following materials. He took round with him a certain Helen, a hired prostitute from the Phoenician city Tyre, after he had purchased her freedom, saying that she was the first conception (or Thought) of his Mind, the Mother of All, by whom in the beginning he conceived in his Mind the making of the Angels and Archangels. That this Thought, leaping forth from him, and knowing what was the will of her Father, descended to the lower regions and generated the Angels and Powers, by whom also he said this world was made. And after she had generated them, she was detained by them. . . . and she suffered every kind of indignity at their hands, to prevent her reascending to her Father, even to being imprisoned in the human body and transmigrating into other female bodies, as from one vessel into another. She was also in that Helen, on whose account the Trojan war arose . . . So she, transmigrating [reincarnating] from body to body, and thereby also continually undergoing indignity, last of all even stood for hire in a brothel; and she was the "lost sheep."

The manifested universe, according to Theosophical philosophy, was never "created," but is an *emanation* of the powers and potentialities locked up eternally in the Divine Spirit, or God. It is a fundamental teaching of Theosophy that "Everything that *is, was,* and *will be,* eternally IS" on the plane of the Ideal. The term *created,* as used in the first chapter of *Genesis,* is apparently a mis-translation, as the following phrase "let there be" seems to show. Nothing in this first chapter of Genesis is *created* new, but each successive stage of emanation, from the most ephemeral to the most concrete, is fashioned "after its kind," that is to say, on the model or image of its pre-existing spiritual prototype. Viewed in this light, Simon's doctrine of the emanation of the Divine Idea or Thought (which is female) becoming imprisoned in form (which he named Helen, the prostitute, or "lost sheep") is but a symbolical representation of a teaching as old as the world. The Mind, or *Manas* principle of

each individual, upon incarnation, becomes caught up in the concerns of Matter (the lower Angels). The need of the Soul, or Christ principle, in each life, is to free the Mind from these lower attractions. Simon, calling himself the Father of the Thought, typifies the Savior, or Christ, whose "knowledge" alone could bring release. It was the gross materialism into which the organizational-minded Christians fell that heaped calumny and abuse upon the heads of the more spiritual elements of the Church. Williston Walker, author of *A History of the Christian Church* (Scribners, 1959, pp. 51-53), says:

> The highest of its (Gnosticism's) influence was from about 135 to 160, though it continued a force long after the latter date. It threatened to overwhelm the historic Christian faith, and by so doing brought upon the Christian Church its gravest crisis since the Pauline battle for freedom from law . . . The Church overcame the danger; and in so doing developed a closely knit organization and a clearly defined creed, which contrasted with the more spontaneous and charismatic nature of primitive Christianity.
>
> Christian tradition represented the founder of Gnosticism to be Simon Magnus [Magus], but of his real relations to it little is known. More clearly defined leaders are Sartornilus of Antioch, who labored before 150; Basilides, who taught in Alexandria about 130; and above all, Valentinus, who was active in Rome from about 135 to 165, and who must be regarded as one of the most gifted thinkers of the age.
>
> Gnosticism was an immense peril for the church. It cut out the historic foundations of Christianity . . . The peril was the greater because Gnosticism was represented by some of the keenest minds in the Church of the second century. The age was syncretistic and in some respects Gnosticism was but the fullest accomplishment of that amalgamation of Hellenic and Oriental philosophical speculation with primitive Christian beliefs which was in greater or less degree in process in all Christian thinking.

In view of the doctrinal battles of the early centuries between the Gnostic branch of Christianity (led by Simon), and the organizational side (led by Peter) which later became the Church, it becomes understandable that we know today only the side of the story that presents Simon as a sorcerer—an emissary of the Devil. Are not enemies always conceived by the self-righteous to be Devils?

What would life on earth be like in the twentieth century if the philosophical Gnostics had won the day? Would the world be divided as it is if the Egyptian, Chaldean and Oriental scriptures, in-

stead of being for the most part destroyed, had been studied side by side with the Bible, as they were in the school of Ammonius Saccas? Would the Alexandrian library, storehouse of the religious and philosophical treasures of antiquity, have been burned by religious fanatics if the policies of such Gnostic sages as Basilides, Valentinus and probably Simon, if we knew more of his teaching, had been followed? And most important of all, would the heavy pall of fear and darkness that envelops the Western mind—making it almost impossible for even sincere minds to dare think for themselves and compare their teachings with those of other nations—would any of this heavy Karma have been made if the healthy diversity of opinion and the freedom of thought encouraged by the Eclectic Theosophical School of Alexandria had been allowed to live?

It was John the Baptist, of whom "there is not a greater," who baptized, or initiated, Jesus. Of the Disciples of John, so often mentioned in the *Gospels,* Simon was the favorite, the successor to John in his School. Is it possible that Simon and the Disciples of John were the representatives and transmitters of the true line of Jesus' teaching through the early centuries of Christian strife? This, we shall probably never know unless, that is, the Lodge of Masters —which is said to have preserved the history and teaching of every religious sect—chooses to give up its records. The following, written in 1877 by H. P. Blavatsky, whom theosophists hold to have been the latest representative of this ancient Lodge, seems suggestive:

> One by one the tide of time engulfed the sects of the early centuries, until of the whole number only one survived in its pristine integrity. That one still exists, still teaches the doctrine of its founder, still exemplifies its faith in works of power. The quicksands which swallowed up every other outgrowth of the religious agitation of the times of Jesus, with its records, relics, and traditions, proved firm ground for this. Driven from their native land, its members found refuge in Persia, and today the anxious traveller may converse with the direct descendents of the "Disciples of John," who listened, on the Jordan's shore, to the "man sent from God," and were baptized and believed. This curious people, numbering 30,000 or more, are miscalled "Christians of St. John," but in fact should be known by their old name of Nazareans, or their new one of Mendeans. (*Isis Unveiled,* II, 289-90.)

(To be concluded)

PHILOSOPHOMENA

I

[The *Philosophomena,* date unknown, but written supposedly by Hippolytus between the years 190 and 250 A.D., is the only remaining shred of teaching that is quoted directly from the works of Simon Magus. The following portion of *Philosophomena* (VI. 7-20, *Refutatio Omnium Hæresium,* 1859) is a refutation of "the system of Simon," obviously written by an enemy of the Gnostic wing of early Christianity. Its value is in the setting forth of the teaching thus condemned. This text was printed in *Lucifer* in a series on Simon Magus, Vols. X-XIII.

Simon, like the Egyptian Hermetists, held that all things are interrelated by correspondence, analogy and similitude—"As above, so below" being the teaching on the Smaragdine Tablet of Hermes. Holding this view, he naturally taught the age-old doctrine that Man, the *Microcosm,* is the Mirror and Potentiality of the *Macrocosm,* or God. The sacred art and science of *Magic* was the use by man of Nature's transcendental laws—not obstructions, but "quickenings" of the natural processes through infusion of intenser vital action. The Æons, or Angels, by imitating the Boundless Power, or God, became Creators in their turn. In like manner, Man, through concentrated control of Mind, imitating the Æons, could produce what appears to be miracles, or *creation.*

The symbology of Simon's system will be readily perceived by students of comparative religions to be that pure *Gnosticism.* —Eds. THEOSOPHY]

I SHALL, therefore, set forth the system of Simon of Gittha, a village of Samaria, and shall show that it is from him that those who followed[1] him got their inspiration, and that the speculations they venture upon have been of a like nature, though their terminology is different.

This Simon was skilled in magic, and deluding many, partly by the art of Thrasymedes, in the way we have explained above,[2] and partly corrupting them by means of dæmons, he endeavoured to deify himself—a sorcerer fellow and full of insanity, whom the apostles confuted in the *Acts.* Far more prudent and modest was the aim of Apsethus, the Libyan, who tried to get himself thought a god

[1] That is to say, the heretics.

[2] In a preceding part of the book against the "Magicians."

in Libya. And as the story of Apsethus is not very dissimilar to the ambition of the foolish Simon, it will not be unseemly to repeat it, for it is quite in keeping with Simon's endeavour.

8. Apsethus, the Libyan, wanted to become a god. But in spite of the greatest exertions he failed to realize his longing, and so he desired that at any rate people should *think* that he had become one; and, indeed, for a considerable time he really did get people to think that such was the case. For the foolish Libyans sacrificed to him as to some divine power, thinking that they were placing their confidence in a voice that came down from heaven.

Well, he collected a large number of parrots and put them all into a cage. For there are a great many parrots in Libya and they mimic the human voice very distinctly. So he kept the birds for some time and taught them to say, "Apsethus is a god." And when, after a long time, the birds were trained and could speak the sentence which he considered would make him be thought to be a god, he opened the cage and let the parrots go in every direction. And the voice of the birds as they flew about went out into all Libya, and their words reached as far as the Greek settlements. And thus the Libyans, astonished at the voice of the birds, and having no idea of the trick which had been played them by Apsethus, considered him to be a god.

But one of the Greeks, correctly surmising the contrivance of the supposed god, not only confuted him by means of the self-same parrots, but also caused the total destruction of this boastful and vulgar fellow. For the Greek caught a number of the parrots and retaught them to say "Apsethus caged us and made us say, 'Apsethus is a god.' " And when the Libyans heard the recantation of the parrots, they all assembled together of one accord and burnt Apsethus alive.

9. And in the same way we must regard Simon, the magician, more readily comparing him with the Libyan fellow's thus becoming a god. And if the comparison is a correct one, and the fate which the magician suffered was somewhat similar to that of Apsethus, let us endeavour to *re-teach the parrots of Simon,* that he was not Christ, who has stood, stands and will stand, but a man, the child of a woman, begotten of seed, from blood and carnal desire, like other men. And that this is the case, we shall easily demonstrate as our narrative proceeds.

Now Simon in his paraphrasing of the Law of Moses speaks with artful misunderstanding. For when Moses says "God is a fire burn-

ing and destroying,"[3] taking in an incorrect sense what Moses said, he declares that Fire is the Universal Principle, not understanding what was said, viz., not that "God is fire," but "a fire burning and destroying." And thus he not only tears to pieces the Law of Moses, but also plunders from Heracleitus the obscure.[4] And Simon states that the Universal Principle is Boundless Power, as follows:

"This is the writing of the revelation of Voice and Name from Thought, the Great Power, the Boundless. Wherefore shall it be sealed, hidden, concealed, laid in the Dwelling of which the Universal Root is the foundation."[5]

And he says that man here below, born of blood, is the Dwelling, and that the Boundless Power dwells in him, which he says is the Universal Root. And, according to Simon, the Boundless Power, Fire, is not a simple thing, as the majority who say that the four elements are simple have considered fire also to be simple, but that the Fire has a twofold nature; and of this twofold nature he calls the one side the concealed and the other the manifested, (stating) that the concealed (parts) of the Fire are hidden in the manifested, and the manifested produced by the concealed.

This is what Aristotle calls "in potentiality" and "in actuality," and Plato the "intelligible" and "sensible."

And the manifested side of the Fire has all things in itself which a man can perceive of things visible, or which he unconsciously fails to perceive. Whereas the concealed side is everything which one can conceive as intelligible, even though it escape sensation, or which a man fails to conceive.

And generally we may say, of all things that are, both sensible and intelligible, which he designates concealed and manifested, the Fire, which is above the heavens, is the treasure-house, as it were a great Tree, like that seen by Nabuchodonosor in vision, from which all flesh is nourished. And he considers the manifested side of the Fire to be the trunk, branches, leaves, and the bark surrounding it on the outside. All these parts of the great Tree, he says, are set on fire from the all-devouring flame of the Fire and destroyed. But the fruit of the Tree, if its imaging has been perfected and it takes the shape of itself, is placed in the storehouse, and not cast into the Fire. For the fruit, he says, is produced to be placed in the

---

[3] *Deuteronomy*, iv. 24.

[4] Heracleitus of Ephesus flourished about the end of the sixth century B.C. He was named the obscure from the difficulty of his writings.

[5] I put the few direct quotations we have from Simon in italics.

storehouse, but the husk to be committed to the Fire; that is to say, the trunk, which is generated not for its own sake but for that of the fruit.

10. And this he says is what is written in the scripture: "For the vineyard of the Lord Sabaôth is the house of Israel, and a man of Judah a well-beloved shoot."[6] And if a man of Judah is a well-beloved shoot, it is shown, he says, that a tree is nothing else than a man. But concerning its sundering and dispersion, he says, the scripture has sufficiently spoken, and what has been said is sufficient for the instruction of those whose imaging has been perfected, viz.: "All flesh is grass, and every glory of the flesh as the flower of grass. The grass is dried up and the flower thereof falleth, but the speech of the Lord endureth for the eternity (æon)."[7] Now the Speech of the Lord, he says, is the Speech engendered in the mouth and the Word (Logos), for elsewhere there is no place of production.

11. To be brief, therefore, the Fire, according to Simon, being of such a nature—both all things that are visible and invisible, and in like manner, those that sound within and those that sound aloud, those which can be numbered and those which are numbered—in the *Great Revelation* he calls it the Perfect Intellectual, as (being) everything that can be thought of an infinite number of times, in an infinite number of ways, both as to speech, thought and action, just as Empedocles[8] says:

"By earth, earth we perceive; by water, water; by æther [divine], æther; fire by destructive fire; by friendship, friendship; and strife by bitter strife."

12. For, he says, he considered that all the parts of the Fire, both visible and invisible, possessed perception and a portion of intelligence. The generable cosmos, therefore, was generated from the ingenerable Fire. And it commenced to be generated, he says, in the following way. The first six Roots of the Principle of generation which the generated (*sc.*, cosmos) took, were from that Fire. And the Roots, he says, were generated from the Fire in pairs,[9] and he calls these Roots Mind and Thought, Voice and Name, Reason and Reflection, and in these six Roots there was the whole of the Boundless Power together, in potentiality, but not in actuality. And this Boundless Power, he says, is He who has stood, stands and will

---

[6] *Isaiah*, v. 7.

[7] *I Peter*, i. 24.

[8] Empedocles of Agrigentum, in Sicily, flourished about B.C. 444.

[9] Syzygies.

stand; who, if his imaging is perfected while in the six Powers, will be, in essence, power, greatness and completeness, one and the same with the ingenerable and Boundless Power, and not one single whit inferior to that ingenerable, unchangeable and Boundless Power. But if it remain in potentiality only, and its imaging is not perfected, then it disappears and perishes, he says, just as the potentiality of grammar or geometry in a man's mind. For potentiality when it has obtained art becomes the light of generated things, but if it does not do so an absence of art and darkness ensues, exactly as if it had not existed at all; and on the death of the man it perishes with him.

13. Of these six Powers and the seventh which is beyond the six, he calls the first pair Mind and Thought, heaven and earth; and the male (heaven) looks down from above and takes thought for its co-partner, while the earth from below receives from the heaven the intellectual fruits that come down to it and are cognate with the earth. Wherefore, he says, the Word ofttimes steadfastly contemplating the things which have been generated from Mind and Thought, that is from heaven and earth, says: "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath said: I have generated sons and raised them up, but they have set me aside."[10]

And he who says this, he says, is the seventh Power, He who has stood, stands and will stand, for He is the cause of those good things which Moses praised and said they were very good. And (the second pair is) Voice and Name, sun and moon. And (the third) Reason and Reflection, air and water. And in all of these was blended and mingled the Great Power, the Boundless, He who has stood, as I have said.

14. And when Moses says: "(It is) in six days that God made the heaven and the earth, and on the seventh he rested from all his works," Simon arranges it differently and thus makes himself into a god. When, therefore, they (the Simonians) say, that there are three days before the generation of the sun and moon, they mean esoterically Mind and Thought—that is to say heaven and earth—and the seventh Power, the Boundless. For these three Powers were generated before all the others. And when they say, "he hath generated me before all the Æons," the words, he says, are used concerning the seventh Power. Now this seventh Power which was the first Power subsisting in the Boundless Power, which was generated before all the Æons, this, he says, was the seventh Power, about

[10] *Isaiah*, i. 2.

which Moses says: "And the spirit of God moved over the water," that is to say, he says, the spirit which hath all things in itself, the Image of the Boundless Power, concerning which Simon says: *"The Image from the incorruptible Form, alone ordering all things."* For the Power which moves above the water, he says, is generated from an imperishable Form, and alone orders all things.

Now the constitution of the world being with them after this or a similar fashion, God, he says, fashioned man by taking soil from the earth. And he made him not single but double, according to the image and likeness. And the Image is the spirit moving above the water, which, if its imaging is not perfected, perishes together with the world, seeing that it remains only in potentiality and does not become in actuality. And this is the meaning of the Scripture, he says: "Lest we be condemned together with the world."[11] But if its imaging should be perfected and it should be generated from an indivisible point, as it is written in his *Revelation,* the small shall become great. And this great shall continue for the boundless and changeless eternity (æon), inasmuch as it is no longer in the process of becoming.

How and in what manner, then, he asks, does God fashion man? In the Garden (Paradise), he thinks. We must consider the womb a Garden, he says, and that this is the case, the Scripture tells us when it says. "I am he who fashioned thee in thy mother's womb,"[12] for he would have it written in this way. In speaking of the Garden, he says, Moses allegorically referred to the womb, if we are to believe the Word.

And, if God fashions man in his mother's womb, that is to say in the Garden, as I have already said, the womb must be taken for the Garden, and Eden for the region (surrounding the womb), and the "river going forth from Eden to water the Garden,"[13] for the navel. This navel, he says, is divided into four channels, for on either side of the navel two air-ducts are stretched to convey the breath, and two veins[14] to convey blood. But when, he says, the navel going forth from the region of Eden is attached to the fœtus in the epigastric region, that which is commonly called by everyone the navel[15] . . . .

---

[11] *I Corinth.*, xi. 32.

[12] See *Jeremiah*, i. 5.

[13] *Genesis*, ii. 10.

[14] Veins and arteries are said not to have been distinguished by ancient physiologists.

[15] A lacuna unfortunately occurs here in the text. The missing words probably identified "that which is commonly called by everyone the navel" with the umbilical cord.

and the two veins by which the blood flows and is carried from the Edenic region through what are called the gates of the liver, which nourish the fœtus. And the air-ducts, which we said were channels for breath, embracing the bladder on either side in the region of the pelvis, are united at the great duct which is called the dorsal aorta. And thus the breath passing through the side doors towards the heart produces the movement of the embryo. For as long as the babe is being fashioned in the Garden, it neither takes nourishment through the mouth, nor breathes through the nostrils. For seeing that it is surrounded by the waters (of the womb), death would instantly supervene, if it took a breath; for it would draw after it the waters and so perish. But the whole (of the fœtus) is wrapped up in an envelope, called the amnion, and is nourished through the navel and receives the essence of the breath through the dorsal duct, as I have said.

15. The river, therefore, he says, which goes out of Eden, is divided into four channels, four ducts, that is to say; into four senses of the fœtus: sight, (hearing),[16] smelling, taste and touch. For these are the only senses the child has while it is being formed in the Garden.

This, he says, is the law which Moses laid down, and in accordance with this very law each of his books was written, as the titles show. The first book is *Genesis,* and the title of the book, he says, is sufficient for a knowledge of the whole matter. For this *Genesis,* he says, is sight, which is one division of the river. For the world is perceived by sight.

The title of the second book is *Exodus.* For it was necessary for that which is born to travel through the Red Sea, and pass towards the Desert—by Red the blood is meant, he says—and taste the bitter water. For the "bitter," he says, is the water beyond the Red Sea, inasmuch as it is the path of knowledge of painful and bitter things which we travel along in life. But when it is changed by Moses, that is to say by the Word, that bitter (water) becomes sweet. And that this is so, all may hear publicly by repeating after the poets:

"In root it was black, but like milk was the flower. Holy the Gods call it. For mortals to dig it up is difficult; but Gods can do all things."[17]

---

[16] This is omitted by Miller in the first Oxford edition.

[17] *Odyssey,* x. 304, *seq.*

16. Sufficient, he says, is what is said by the Gentiles for a knowledge of the whole matter, for those who have ears for hearing. For he who tasted this fruit, he says, was not only not changed into a beast by Circe, but using the virtue of the fruit, reshaped those who had been already changed into beasts, into their former proper shape, and restruck and recalled their type. For the true man and one beloved by that sorceress is discovered by this milk-white divine fruit, he says.

In like manner *Leviticus,* the third book, is smelling or respiration. For the whole of that book treats of sacrifices and offerings. And wherever there is a sacrifice, there arises the smell of the scent from the sacrifice owing to the incense, concerning which sweet smell the sense of smell is the test.

Numbers, the fourth book, signifies taste, wherein speech (or the Word) energizes. And it is so called through uttering all things in numerical order.

Deuteronomy, again, he says, is so entitled in reference to the sense of touch of the child which is formed. For just as the touch by contact synthesizes and confirms the sensations of the other senses, proving objects to be either hard, warm, or adhesive, so also the fifth book of the Law is the synthesis of the four books which precede it.

All ingenerables, therefore, he says, are in us in potentiality but not in actuality, like the science of grammar or geometry. And if they meet with befitting utterance and instruction, and the "bitter" is turned into the "sweet"—that is to say, spears into reaping hooks and swords into ploughshares—the Fire will not have born to it husks and stocks, but perfect fruit, perfected in its imaging, as I said above, equal and similar to the ingenerable and Boundless Power. "For now," says he, "the axe is nigh to the roots of the tree: every tree," he says, "that bringeth not forth good fruit, is cut down and cast into the fire."

(To be concluded)

Two extravagances: to exclude Reason, to admit only Reason.
—BLAISE PASCAL

ON FIRST ACQUAINTANCE— "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"

XV

> [An idea] is a *being* incorporeal, which has no substance by itself, but gives figure and form unto shapeless matter, and *becomes the cause of the manifestation.*
>
> —PLUTARCH

PERHAPS, by following the more universal aspect of our mind-life and pushing into the frontiers of abstract thought where *The Secret Doctrine* leads, we are remaking ourselves after a wider and more inclusive design—something that might include, say, the *earth's* body as the habitat to which we are responsible rather than *our* physical bodies and their relations. Yet this change would not render the physical body useless or not worth caring for; it is simply that life could begin to be lived *through* it rather than on behalf of it. Our bodies should be intelligently utilized in the same way a good carpenter gets maximum usage from his tools—though of course the interrelationship is more complex.

The effect of a transmuting of attitudes within a man may be to make the person less personal and of more use to life in general. Certainly there are two kinds of revolutionaries: one goes out "horizontally" in a quest for power and becomes more personal than before; the other goes up "vertically," seeking attunement with the universal part of himself, thus transcending his own personal nature first; the net effect is a sacrifice of the personal on behalf of the whole, not because of some particular *acquired* "goodness" or heroism, but because it is the inescapable logic of the *new viewpoint.* The heroism clearly is in the agony of transition, and not in any settled state of attainment; for once the transmutation to a more nearly incorporeal nature is well begun, selfishness may become as difficult to comprehend or practice as altruism is for the person sunk deeply into the world of things.

There may be a way in which we could say that *The Secret Doctrine* unfolds as a scientific document only as we begin to abandon the idea that one can acquire or lose knowledge, and look at our study more as a problem of transmutation or awakening. If this is so, then the boundary line between obscurity and clarity in *The*

Secret Doctrine may be not so much attributable to H.P.B.'s depth, writing style, etc., as to our capacity to understand. In fact, we might paraphrase our initial quotation from Plutarch and say that H.P.B., through her life, has made us the possessors of a multi-dimensional idea which will give form and shape to the shapeless matter of our life. Or, in other words, it will begin to illuminate the almost impenetrable darkness of a life in a short-lived body directed by a mind that does not yet sense eternity. Her work may be a kind of "philosopher's stone" that takes us where we are and connects us individually to the crucial "next step" in the Mind's journey through the flesh. H.P.B.'s writings, that is, help us to dissolve our identification with our bodies, so that we may begin to use them as an accessory to our Conscience, enhancing our sense of belonging to a Universal Stream of life—or, one might say increasing our realization of being essentially "incorporeal."

How is such a task to be accomplished? Tentatively, two effects which a rhythmic and disinterested inspection of the *S.D.* tend to accomplish are: (*a*) Negatively, it begins to break down our belief in our bodies, sapping our faith in physical life as being a container of value, lowering it from an arbiter of Mind to a Servant; and (*b*) Positively, it begins to convince us that Mind through our own efforts, can become a self-illuminating vehicle, capable of using the physical body as a kind of entity to a deeper process. And further, that this illumination might apply to the most seemingly trivial tasks.

Our subjective life can come to be controlled by a "sense of fitness," from behind our ordinary mental life. For example, books once read with interest can no longer be read. Why? Not because they have lost their abstract appeal or are not potentially of much use, but *because they are not attuned* to this new sense of duty, or of debt arising from within.

If we think of the totality of our perceptions, whether they are of that past which arises in the memory from direct environmental prompting or perception of the world through communication, travel, etc.—if we think of these reference-points as ourselves, then to have a "sense of debt" to this *totality* is natural. And the discharging of total duty, while horrendous to the personal man, is not, in fact, so bad, it would follow. The most hazardous, arduous, even sacrificial undertakings, may become clarifying to our concept of *why we are alive* if they have arisen from the inner view of what we

think we, as the little self, should be doing for the One Self.

It may be a problem such as this that the ancients had in mind when they so often spoke about a preliminary purification which had to be undertaken by a person seeking to shift the rulership of his life from outer to inner direction. To tell us to "drop our self-made chains" may be simple to say, but when those chains from long use have become woven into our lives like the fibers of the mango fruit, then disentanglement is not simple but begins to have the character of an Odyssey, or an Herculean labor.

However, despite the complex and difficult nature of the journey, it would seem that the goal remains clear—union with the Universal or incorporeal man.

Whether we succeed in any one incarnation or not, the worth inherent within the work may arise before the mind's eye and sustain us even in the midst of apparent defeat. That which the small self must do loses much of its onerous quality when we participate in the *"sense of growth"* that comes from a discovery of duty.

One of the "drives" behind such an effort might be the conviction that no deed instigated by unselfish motives, however odd or mistaken it may appear in retrospect, or to others, can have its *fruits* crushed by a bad passage into the visible. As Bruno said in *De Monade*:

> Much have I struggled. I thought I would be able to
> conquer . . .
> And both fate and nature repressed my zeal and my strength.
> Even to have come forth is something, since I see that
> being able to conquer
> Is placed in the hands of fate. However, there was in me
> Whatever I was able to do, which no future century
> Will deny to be mine, that which a victor could have
> for his own:
> Not to have feared to die, not to have yielded to any equal
> In firmness of nature, and to have preferred a courageous
> death to a
> Noncombatant life.

YOUTH FORUM

Despite numerous public exclamations of admiration concerning various "great" paintings or poems, there seems still to be an undercurrent of apathy and even distrust in most people's attitudes about æsthetic subjects—an attitude which is reflected in clichés such as "more truth than poetry," and in a general disparagement of "art for art's sake." But what is art, really? And why do so many people resist it? (See Youth Forum for December, 1960, also July, 1962, and July, 1964.)

Unfortunately it seems nowadays that art is used largely as therapy for the artist and that people in general react against what they consider "sickness," bloated intellectualism, or moral dislocation. It is of course true that art has always reflected society, and so to an extent the "pop art" invading the galleries and the anti-heroes invading literature may merely be signs of the times. Let us hope, though, that the artists responsible shall not in any real sense come to constitute "unacknowledged legislators" of our age—for if they do, our age is surely doomed to chaos. Let them remain as mere symptoms of *our* sickness; then they will have some value for us, even if only a negative one.

It seems that this imbalance or sickness that we notice in so many modern works might stem from the artists' misunderstanding of the nature of art—from undervaluing or overvaluing it. And many seem to have become involved with art for the wrong reasons. If they have been guilty of overvaluing it, for example, they are likely to think themselves prophets, and their work is liable to be solemn, pompous, and terribly meaningful; whereas if they have undervalued it, they are likely to consider it an inexpensive substitute for psychoanalysis, and to "express themselves" through it—filling whole canvasses with gashes of orange, etc. But the greatest of art is not inspired *either* by self-love or self-hatred. Those are feelings that make us contract, and make people (if they are sensible) turn away from any works of art inspired by them.

Of course, in these few paragraphs it is not possible even to hope to express a satisfying definition of art (though apparently it has

been possible to express some indignation); but surely the feeling out of which great art is generated must be expansive and outgoing, a sense of overflowing, a feeling of almost cosmic generosity. For there does indeed seem to be something gratuitous—something unexpected, preciously fragile and freely given—about truly great art. The artifact itself can't really last for long—even the Sistine ceiling has cracks in it now—but the feeling the artifact stands for is, fortunately, highly contagious, and sows itself in new minds all the time, inspiring new works, which in turn may serve to remind still later generations, not of how "sick" we are, but of how beautiful and very big the universe is.

Keats declared that a thing of beauty is a joy forever; how can this be, when we know all things are subject to time, unless it is that the spirit in art stands somehow outside of time, complete unto itself, ever "breaking out of all its contours, like a star," and yet ever returning again into itself, like the downward glance of a Michelangelo madonna? All great artistic works, then, may be seen as emblematic of eternity; may be seen, in short, as symbols. Perhaps this really means that art must find its inspiration and substance in philosophy—the key to an understanding of all symbols—though usually, for the artist, his philosophy will be so deeply implicit that it can make itself felt only as a general attitude towards life; since after all, if his philosophy were merely conceptual, his art would be only propaganda. Yet he must have a philosophical basis. It is not enough to "go off and be an artist." It is not even enough to work at technique for years and years. Work is essential, of course, but work alone will make one merely a craftsman—and one must *aspire* to become an artist. That aspiration is impossible unless one has certain feelings about the nature of the universe, the dignity of man, the possibility for growth. Theosophy certainly is one philosophy which gives a person ample psychological room for aspiration, although of course other religions and philosophies have to some extent given it also, since all that is really needed is a sense of awe before the immensity of Cosmos, and a feeling of love for all the human particulars of our world.

What then is the artist, philosophically speaking? In Emerson's words, the genius or potential artist which resides in the heart of every human being "is a continuation of the power that made him and that has not done making him." It is in this sense—as a power —that the artist achieves immortality, even though his creations,

like our own bodies, must some day be lost. For though the marble must return to the earth, and (according to Ecclesiastes) "the golden bowl be broken," the earth will not only abide, but may actually become a bit more spiritually porous, more sentient, for having experienced a miracle—that of transformation into art. "The evolution of the entire universe," says Loren Eiseley, "—stars, elements, life, man—is a process of drawing something out of nothing, out of the utter void of non-being. The creative element in the mind of man—that latency which can conceive gods, carve statues, move the heart with the symbols of great poetry, or devise the formulas of modern physics—emerges in as mysterious a fashion as those elementary particles which leap into momentary existence in great cyclotrons, only to vanish again like infinitesimal ghosts. The reality we know in our limited lifetimes is dwarfed by the unseen potential of the abyss where science stops. In a similar way the smaller universe of the individual human brain has its lonely cometary passages, or flares suddenly like a super nova, only to subside in death while the waves of energy it has released roll on through unnumbered generations."

Ultimately, the true artist is one who draws some portion of an unseen potential out of the abyss. And as such he becomes one of the healers of mankind's wounds and illnesses and one of the leaders of all life's evolution; for it is he, like Adam, who gives a name and a context to things and feelings, and thus in a sense gives them life. He gives them a chance, a significance, a gentle push towards sentience—and in this wayward world a home.

* * *

The grace of the whispering autumn field lies dying
behind those low and blunted walls of words.
Forgive them, do not ask the stones to sing,
to miracle the world by turning men
and storming all the fortresses of death;
for death is also human, and needs us strangely,
as woman needs embrace,—or a poet, words.

Ask only, then, that every stone be real,
not philosophic simulation, but stone
pressing the earth like heavy-breasted death
pressing as itself is pressed by life,
so that even if the hidden fields
fade, we'll know at least that they were real
and must therefore have lived to have so died.

on the lookout

Another Transition Volume

The Symbolic and the Real, by Ira Progoff (Julian Press, 1964), is in several respects a significant extension of the insights in Dr. Progoff's earlier work, *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology.* Of particular interest to Theosophists will be a chapter titled "Psyche-evoking for our Time," in which the author gives a thoroughly appreciative account of the psychological wisdom symbolized by the Socratic teaching of rebirth. The emphasis here is very much like that in Herbert Fingarette's *The Self in Transformation,* for the literal or "scientific" case for or against reincarnation is considered temporarily beside the point, while the grandeur of the philosophical perspective of a plurality of lines is accorded a special psychological validity. (It is interesting to note that Dr. Fingarette has arrived at his conception of "karma and the inner world" during a continuing devotion to Freud, whereas Dr. Progoff formulates a similar conception as a disciple of Carl Jung.)

The Inward Source

Dr. Progoff introduces the idea of reincarnation by natural progression in a chapter on Socrates, beginning:

> When Socrates was called before the court in Athens to speak in his defense, he presented a statement of the meaning of his personal existence that has the greatest significance for the psychological situation of modern man.
>
> Socrates there described his intimate feeling of why it was important for him to live his life as he had been living it. It was not a question of an intellectual philosophy, but of a *calling* that came to him from two sources, an outward source and an inward source, which Socrates understood is ultimately not separate at all from one another. The outward source of his calling was the *gods* of the Greek Pantheon; and to this the Oracle at Delphi testified. The inward source of his calling was the oracle within himself. He described this as "the divine faculty of which the internal oracle is the source." To Socrates the inward and the outward were two aspects of a single principle. It was in the light of this unity that he could state his belief "that there are

gods in a sense higher than that in which any of my accusers believe in them."

The "Gadfly" as Evoker

Socrates conceived his role as comparable to that of an insect that goads or stings cattle, thus rousing them out of their lethargy. Dr. Progoff continues:

> The comparison was deliberate. Human beings live as though in a sleep. Like cattle, they go through life automatically chewing their cud of superficial opinion never becoming aware of the superior food that lies latent within their capacities of knowledge, hidden and unused, but available to them. They have to be awakened from their unawareness and goaded to move onwards towards new recognition of meaning in life.
>
> The first stage of Socrates' work as gadfly was to neutralize the *impedimenta* of human opinion in order to clear the way for a fuller realization from within, by means as Socrates put it, of "the divine faculty of which the internal oracle is the source." The second stage then involved a more affirmative style of goading, a drawing forth from the human person of those intimations of truth that inhere in his deepest nature. In this second, more constructive phase of his work, Socrates undertook to stir people not merely to question themselves and thus to neutralize their false opinions, but he sought to stir up and awaken the latent capacities of knowledge that rest unused, and often unsuspected, in the recesses of the individual mind.

The Metaphysic of the Mind

But what are these "recesses"? On what logical basis can one justify proceeding on the assumption that every human being knows far more than he knows he knows? Dr. Progoff continues:

> Socrates deduced that teaching is not a matter of something being placed in one person by another, but is a question of eliciting something that is already present, although only implicitly and latently, at hidden depths of the individual's mind.
>
> To us in modern times there are several different ways in which such an event can be understood; but to Socrates it was self-evident that capacity was the result of an experience had in a previous lifetime.
>
> What has been called Socrates' "favorite doctrine" was at the base of this. It was a doctrine with a very ancient lineage, the belief that the immortality of the individual soul is expressed in many incarnations at different points in history. Socrates' special application of it here was his view that the soul carries with it through all its future incarnations the memories of its experiences, and of all the knowledge it has acquired in all its earlier

lives; but each time it is born into a new body it forgets what it has known and is as ignorant then as if it had never lived before.

Summation

The essence of the Socratic doctrine, in these terms, has to do with the nature of individuality: a true spiritual individuality is *there*, within, but the capacity to bring it to fruition must be acquired through a series of progressive awakenings. Though contemporary depth psychology has evolved without reference to any metaphysical assumptions, opinion in the field has developed almost as if the metaphysical assumption of reincarnation was present; for when Dr. Progoff speaks of the "timeless journey of the soul," he is certainly using the philosophic language of reincarnation in a way entirely natural to him:

> Socrates' goal as a goad was to stir men up so that the traces of knowledge garnered through the timeless journey of the soul could come alive again. He sought to open a way for the true wisdom of which the oracle had spoken. His goal was to touch the depths in men, to evoke what was hidden and unremembered there, in order that it might serve as an inward source of truth.
>
> We can see at this point a striking similarity between the calling of Socrates and the trend of work emerging in modern depth psychology. Both proceed on the hypothesis that the resources of wisdom are hidden in the depths of the human being, and that they are best able to unfold in meaning when they are stirred to full expression.

A Psychological and Spiritual Perspective

Dr. Progoff concludes the chapter on "Psyche-evoking for our Time" with this paragraph:

> One important difference is to be noted between the Socratic way and the psychological way. The one speaks in the terms of traditional philosophy, drawing upon images that reach far into the past of classical mythology. The other phrases its insights in the style of modern science and seeks to establish its relation to the timeless images of life in terms that meet the criteria of modern knowledge. This is indeed an important difference, but it is a connection as well. Both modern psychology and the Socratic way are instances of man's disciplined attempts to reach toward reality in modes of thought that fit the tone and temper of their times. Beyond their differences in style lies a quality of integrity that unites them; and from this unity we may eventually be able to draw the model of a psychological and spiritual perspective that will answer our modern need.

"You Will Come Back"

The reincarnation pamphlet so titled, first printed in 1958, has recently "come back" in a fourth printing which also includes some provocative revision. Written by Frances Eurith Goold, a Canadian Theosophist, in the form of a dialogue between a liberal Christian and a theosophical student, this inviting treatise has received favorable reception in England, as well as in Canada and the United States. The 1964 printing was noted in the annual letter circulated among members of the United Lodge of Theosophists last June, in full recognition of the value of such a worthy "independent effort" to present reincarnation in a philosophic context.

The tone of *You Will Come Back* is not doctrinaire or argumentative, the author regarding this presentation as but one of many which may be expected to herald a popular appreciation of the concept of rebirth. (In 1959, the English Methodist quoted earlier, the Rev. L. D. Weatherhead, produced the best "within the church" discussion of reincarnation that has yet appeared—*The Case for Reinincarnation*—and he is, of course, cited in *You Will Come Back*.)

An Unmistakable Trend

Bishop Robinson's controversial *Honest to God* and Bishop Neill's *Christian Faith Today* are further examples of the new thinking among liberal Christians which points in a theosophical direction. Miss Goold quotes from Dr. Weatherhead's *The Case for Reincarnation*:

> How can a world progress in inner things . . . if the birth of every new generation fills the world with unregenerate souls full of original sin? There can never be a perfect world unless gradually those born into it can take advantage of lessons learned in earlier lives instead of starting at scratch.

Miss Goold also refers to the volume, *Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology*, which "in 350 pages demonstrates the rebirth idea to be a very real part of our Western heritage, from ancient Greece and Egypt right down to modern times." Further "in *Christian Faith Today*, Bishop Neill testifies to 'the determinative influence' in Indian history over more than 2,000 years of these doctrines of reincarnation and karma."

Philosophy More Than Doctrine

Following is an important development in the revised edition of *You Will Come Back*:

Student: We need to make a sharp distinction between the *philosophy* of reincarnation and those religious interpretations of it which place the emphasis on other-worldly consummations. Hinduism and Buddhism emphasize Nirvana as the goal; Christianity talks about heaven. In all these cases one more or less endures life in a physical body here on earth, as a kind of purgatory.

Mr. A.: I can't see that there is any psychological difference between the goal of a Hindu or Buddhist devotee and the goal of a Christian.

Student: What we've been saying is that when religious interpretation takes over, the *philosophy* of reincarnation and its central message is lost. . . .

"Death is *not* the great informer or producer of knowledge," to quote Wm. Q. Judge. "It is only the great curtain on the stage, to be rung up next instant. Complete knowledge must be attained in the triune man: body, soul and spirit. When that is obtained, then he passes on to other spheres, which to us are unknown and are endless. By living as long as one can, one gives the Self that longer chance."

The Central Affirmation

There is a sense in which reincarnation philosophy provides a true "existentialist" perspective:

Mr. A.: What I would like to get hold of is the central message of reincarnation you spoke of earlier.

Student: Very good. Here it is: Reality is to be experienced *here* not somewhere else. Your opportunity is NOW, not later. This is the essentially theosophical view of reincarnation. And it is also the inner, esoteric meaning of the Upanishads, and of Jesus and of Paul the Initiate. We must not confuse the Nirvana of the Hindus and Buddhists and the heaven of Christianity, with the infinite opportunity and continuity *ad infinitum* which is the true inner teaching. Have I made this clear?

Mr. A.: Yes. I think you have. The horizon recedes. Along with the teaching that what man sows, man will surely reap, it seems to me this broad conception of gradual attainment through rebirth would have a most sobering effect on people.

Student: Not just sobering! There is hope as well, a great deal of hope. Character is the spiritual fabric woven by evolution. It is the only thing we take with us through the portal of death, and it is what we bring back with us as our heritage from the past when we return to incarnation. Reincarnation and karma are the hidden core of the gospel of Jesus. One does well to refrain from confusing Christianity with the religion of Jesus. They are not identical.

"The Ocean of Theosophy"

The previous quotation from William Q. Judge is one of many references to the unassuming work of an often-neglected Theosophical educator. *You Will Come Back* "places" Judge and recommends that he be studied:

> *Student*: Read Wm. Q. Judge's book, *The Ocean of Theosophy*. It has only 153 pages and four of its seventeen chapters deal with reincarnation and karma. The rest of the book outlines the major doctrines of occult philosophy. Mr. Judge has a genius for direct, simple statement. The *Ocean* first appeared as a series of newspaper articles but it has been so popular that it has gone through seventeen editions in English alone.
>
> *Mr. A.*: What was Mr. Judge's connection with Madame Blavatsky?
>
> *Student*: He was Co-Founder with her of the first Theosophical Society established in New York City on Nov. 17, 1875. And, while we are on the subject of origins, let me say that it is important to distinguish between the *original literature* of Theosophy and all later works called "theosophical." Although no special authority attaches to any theosophical book because of its authorship, the writings of these two are "authoritative" in the sense that inquirers who wish to know what Theosophy teaches will find it in pure form in the works of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge.

Patterns of Karma

From the day of the assassination of the late President John F. Kennedy, various parallels with the death of Lincoln have been noted by feature writers, numerologists, and astrologers: It does seem apparent that within any culture, or in the life of a nation or organization, certain cyclic recurrences of impressions may manifest in the circumstances surrounding crucial events. The negative ideations of any collective lower psyche seem to exert the fixating influence suggested by H. P. Blavatsky in "Cyclic Evolution and Karma"—unless the whole complex of impressions is fragmented by a corresponding propulsion of a higher and nobler sort. When the latter is accomplished, there is no "history" available which recounts the alteration—except that readable by the eye of the occultist, which reveals the innumerable repetitive tragedies which do *not* take place. Conversely, though, when tragedies recur, the Theosophist may be forcibly reminded of how it is that errors of omission in the fulfilling of moral responsibilities have allowed the repetition.

Odd Links Traced in Assassination

Under this title the June 13 *Evening Outlook* (Santa Monica) lists parallel circumstances in the Lincoln and Kennedy killings:

1. Both of these presidents, Lincoln and Kennedy, were concerned with the issue of civil rights.

2. Lincoln was elected in 1860 and Kennedy was elected in 1960.

3. Both were slain on a Friday and in the presence of their wives.

4. Their successors, both named Johnson, were Southerners, Democrats, and had previously served in the U.S. Senate.

5. Andrew Johnson was born in 1808—Lyndon B. Johnson was born in 1908.

6. John Wilkes Booth was born in 1839—Lee Harvey Oswald was born in 1939.

7. Both Booth and Oswald were slain before trial could be held.

8. Booth and Oswald were both Southerners favoring unpopular ideas.

9. Both presidents' wives lost children through death while residing in the White House.

10. Lincoln's secretary, whose name was Kennedy, advised him not to go to the theater the night he was killed.

11. President Kennedy's secretary, whose name was Lincoln, advised him not to go to Dallas.

Semi-Hidden Portents

Such startling parallels in events of world-wide concern have turned the minds of many to the perennial claims of astrologers and numerologists—despite the fact that many systems built in the names of each have beguiled, rather than educated, the public. However, the tendency toward exploitation of astrology and numerology should not be surprising when one recalls that both these so-called "sciences" are based on what was in ancient times a truly occult knowledge. An article by H. P. Blavatsky titled "Stars and Numbers" (last printed in THEOSOPHY 44:388) begins:

> Ancient civilization saw nothing absurd in the claims of astrology, no more than many an educated and thoroughly scientific man sees in it to-day. Judicial astrology, by which the fate and acts of men and nations might be foreknown, appeared, nor does it even now appear, any more unphilosophical or unscien-

tific than does natural astrology or astronomy—by which the events of so-called brute and inanimate nature (changes in weather, etc.) might be predicted. For it was not even prophetic insight that was claimed by the votaries of that abstruse and really grand science, but simply a great proficiency in that method of procedure which allows the astrologer to foresee certain events in the life of a man by the position of the planets at the time of his birth.

And in *Isis Unveiled* (II, 407), she says:

All systems of religious mysticism are based on numerals. With Pythagoras, the Monas or unity, emanating the duad, and thus forming the trinity, and the quaternary (the mystic *four*), compose the number seven. The sacredness of numbers begins with the great First—the ONE, and ends only with the nought or zero—symbol of the infinite and boundless circle which represents the universe. All the intervening figures, in whatever combination, or however multiplied, represent philosophical ideas, from vague outlines down to a definitely-established scientific axiom, relating either to a moral or a physical fact in nature.

Strange Parallel of Numbers and Events

A contemporary example of a popular numerology is provided in a pocket book edition of *Cheiro's Book of Numbers* (Arc, 1964). ("Cheiro" was the professional name of Count Louis Hamon, who, says the publisher, "stood foremost among the world's seers for nearly thirty years" before his death in 1936.) In a famous case cited, Cheiro remarks: "One of the most remarkable instances I have ever come across of numbers pointing to a sequence of similar events in lives as far apart as over five hundred years, and which might be used as evidence of reincarnation, is the extraordinary case of St. Louis of France and King Louis XVI." The exact interval between the birth of St. Louis and that of Louis XVI was 539 years. This interval added to significant dates in the life of St. Louis gives a result that parallels similar events in the life of Louis XVI, as the following columns show:

St. Louis		Louis XVI
Birth of St. Louis 23rd April,	1215	Birth of Louis 23rd August 1754
	539	
	1754	
Birth of Isabel, sister of St. Louis	1225	Birth of Elizabeth, sister of Louis XVI
	539	1764
	1764	

Death of Louis VIII, father of St. Louis 1226 539 1765	Death of the Dauphin, father of Louis XVI 1765
Marriage of St. Louis 1231 539 1770	Marriage of Louis XVI 1770
Majority of St. Louis (King) 1235 539 1774	Accession of Louis XVI, King of France 1774
Captivity of St. Louis 1250 539 1789	Louis XVI deprived of power 1789

Some Specific Observations

In the article cited above ("Stars and Numbers"), H.P.B. calls attention to some remarkable correspondences with the year 1881:

> The year 1881, of which we have lived but one-third, promises, as predicted by astrologers and astronomers, a long and gloomy list of disasters on land, as on the seas. We have shown elsewhere (*Bombay Gazette,* March 30, 1881) how strange in every respect was the grouping of the figures of our present year, adding that another such combination will not happen in the Christian chronology before the year 11811, just 9,930 years hence, when—there will be no more a "Christian" chronology we are afraid, but something else. We said: "Our year 1881, offers that strange fact, that from whichever of four sides you look at its figures—from right or left, from top or bottom, from the back, by holding the paper up to the light—or even *upside down* you will always have before you the same mysterious and kabalistic numbers of 1881. It is the correct number of the three figures which have most perplexed mystics for over eighteen centuries. The year 1881, in short, is the number of the great Beast of the Revelation, the number 666 of St. John's *Apocalypsis*—that Kabalistic Book *par excellence*. See for yourselves: 1+8+8+1 make eighteen; eighteen divided thrice gives three times six, or placed in a row, 666, 'the number of man'."

Later in the article, H.P.B. points out the significance of the numerals 1 and 8 as they recurred in the life of Czar Alexander II, who was born in 1818 and murdered in 1881. Thus H.P.B. asserts the occultism of both astrology and number-correlations. The exploi-

tation of these "sciences," however, results in a tendency to assume that the stars and numbers *govern* man; whereas man, as a reincarnating, creative, self-conscious Being, writes his own destiny in both stars and numbers.

Insights from Great Scriptures

The "Thoughts for Meditation" page of *The Leader* (Unitarian-Universalist) continues to universalize the content of great religious teachings by comparative quotations. In the June issue, editor Jacob Trapp includes three selections from the *Dhammapada* and six from the *Bhagavad-Gita,* adding familiar passages from the Sermon on the Mount:

> Ask, and it shall be given you;
> Seek, and ye shall find;
> Knock, and it shall be opened to you:
> For every one that asketh receiveth;
> And he that seeketh findeth;
> And to him that knocketh it shall be opened.
> (Sermon on the Mount.)
>
> * * *
>
> Quickly I come, to those who offer me every action
> Whatever wish men bring me in worship,
> That wish I grant them.
> Whatever path men travel is my path:
> No matter where they walk, it leads to me.
> (*Bhagavad-Gita.*)
>
> * * *
>
> The gift of the law exceeds all gifts;
> The sweetness of the law exceeds all sweetness;
> The delight of the law exceeds all delight.
> He who drinks in the law lives with a serene mind.
> The sage rejoices in the lotus of the true law.
> (*Dhammapada.*)